

how this plan was created

April 30, 2004

1

The Downtown Master Plan demonstrates the involvement of citizens in defining the future of their Downtown.

What is a Charrette?

Charrette is a French word that translates as “little cart.” At the leading architecture school of the 19th century, the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, students would be assigned a tough design problem to work out under pressure of time. They would continue sketching as fast as they could, even as little carts—charrettes—carried their drawing boards away to be judged and graded. Today, “charrette” has come to describe a rapid, intensive, and creative work session in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are product-oriented. The public charrette is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American communities.

Working together as a community is the way to guide growth and assure quality development for future generations of Fayetteville residents. The Downtown Master Plan demonstrates just this kind of teamwork.

In 2003, Dover, Kohl & Partners was selected by the City of Fayetteville to lead the process and create the Downtown Master Plan. Their team included urban economists, UrbanAdvisors, transportation experts, Hall Planning & Engineering, marketing and branding experts, BensonMiles TND, and a computer visualization company, UrbanAdvantage.

"Designing in public," the Dover-Kohl team conducted an open planning process in January 2004 to identify the ideas, needs and concerns of the community. Participants helped to create the Downtown Master Plan through an intensive design event called a *charrette*. Over the course of seven days, a series of hands-on workshops were held with the community and the team of design professionals. Community participants included property owners, neighbors, business people, developers, elected officials, City staff, students, and community leaders.

Charrette Preparation

Prior to the charrette, the Dover-Kohl team focused their efforts on gathering base information. This included learning about local history, reviewing previous plans and studies, examining the existing City ordinances and land development regulations, and analyzing the physical, social, and economic characteristics of Downtown. The team visited Fayetteville in fall 2003 and met with City officials, staff, Downtown organizations, community leaders, and other local stakeholders in preparation for the charrette.

The team compiled the information gathered from the site visit in a series of site analysis diagrams. The diagrams contained information and data pertaining to land use, property ownership, parking supply, and natural resources, among others.

A key element in preparing for the charrette was generating public awareness. Challenged with that important task, City staff spread the word about the Downtown charrette by placing ads in the local newspapers, posting public notices, placing flyers in businesses downtown, and mailings. In addition, the



Historic Photographs of Downtown Fayetteville.



Credit: Bob's Studio of Photography



Bentonville

City arranged for all charrette events to be televised on the local cable access television channel.

Study Tours

To further understand Fayetteville's situation in Northwest Arkansas, the team visited Rogers, Bentonville, Springdale and their environs. The tour helped the team to better grasp growth pressures in the region and the essential need to maintain and preserve Fayetteville's character. After visiting the neighboring towns, City staff led the team on a tour of Fayetteville, to enhance the team's understanding of issues affecting the City as a whole. After touring the region and City, the team focused on the Downtown study area. The team examined every street in the study area, noting areas of particular concern and the existing urban fabric (network of blocks and streets). Members of the team walked and photographed a variety of urban conditions, noting building form, building placement, architectural character, street designs, topographic conditions, and the natural landscape. Prepared with maps of the existing conditions of the study area, team members highlighted potential areas for infill development, parking supply and demand, buildings of architectural/historical significance, and unique conditions and characteristics of the Downtown.



Rogers





Fayetteville

ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS


The analysis diagrams are based on 2003 information provided by the City's GIS Department.

Building Footprints

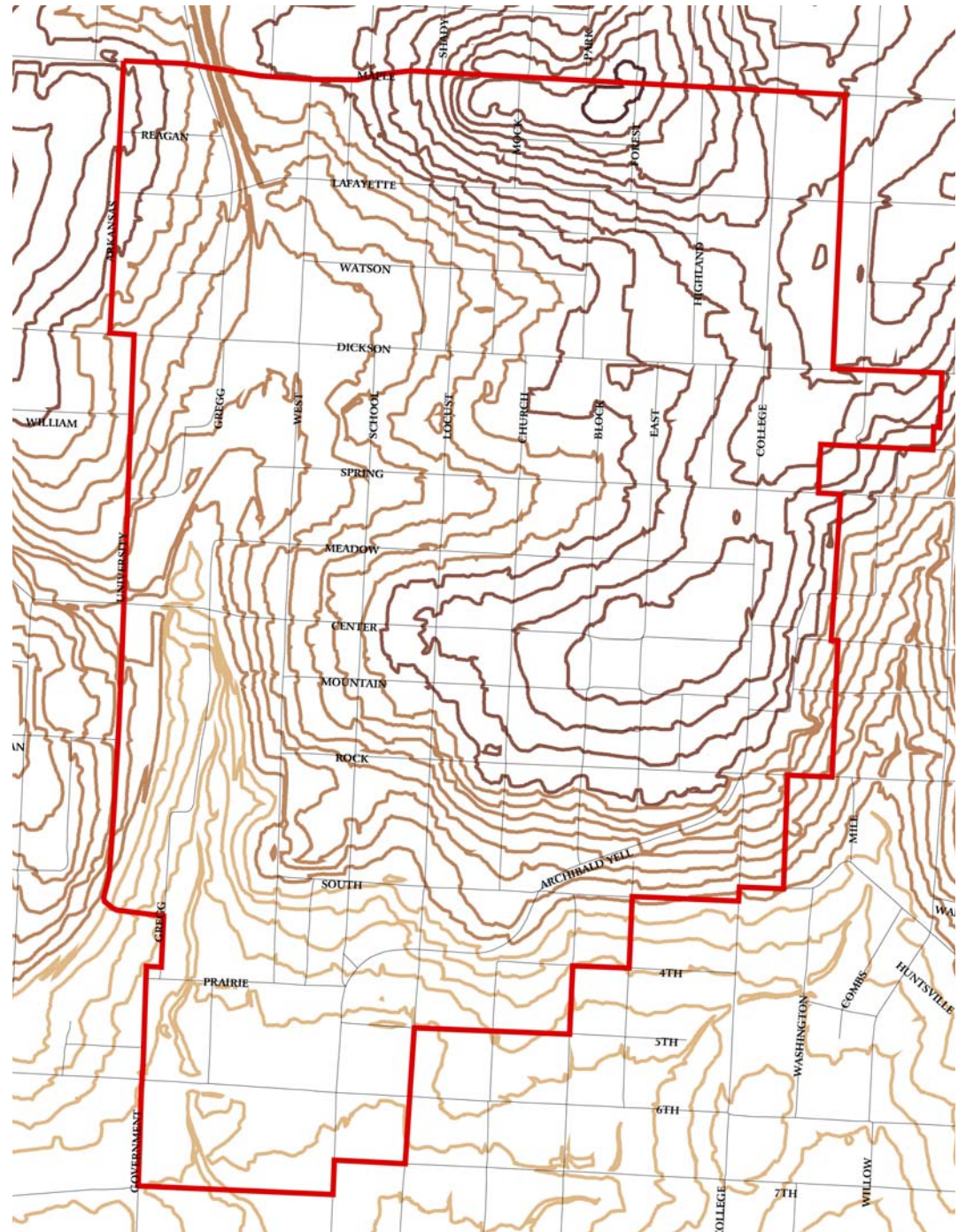
-  Downtown Master Plan Boundary
-  Existing Buildings



Topography

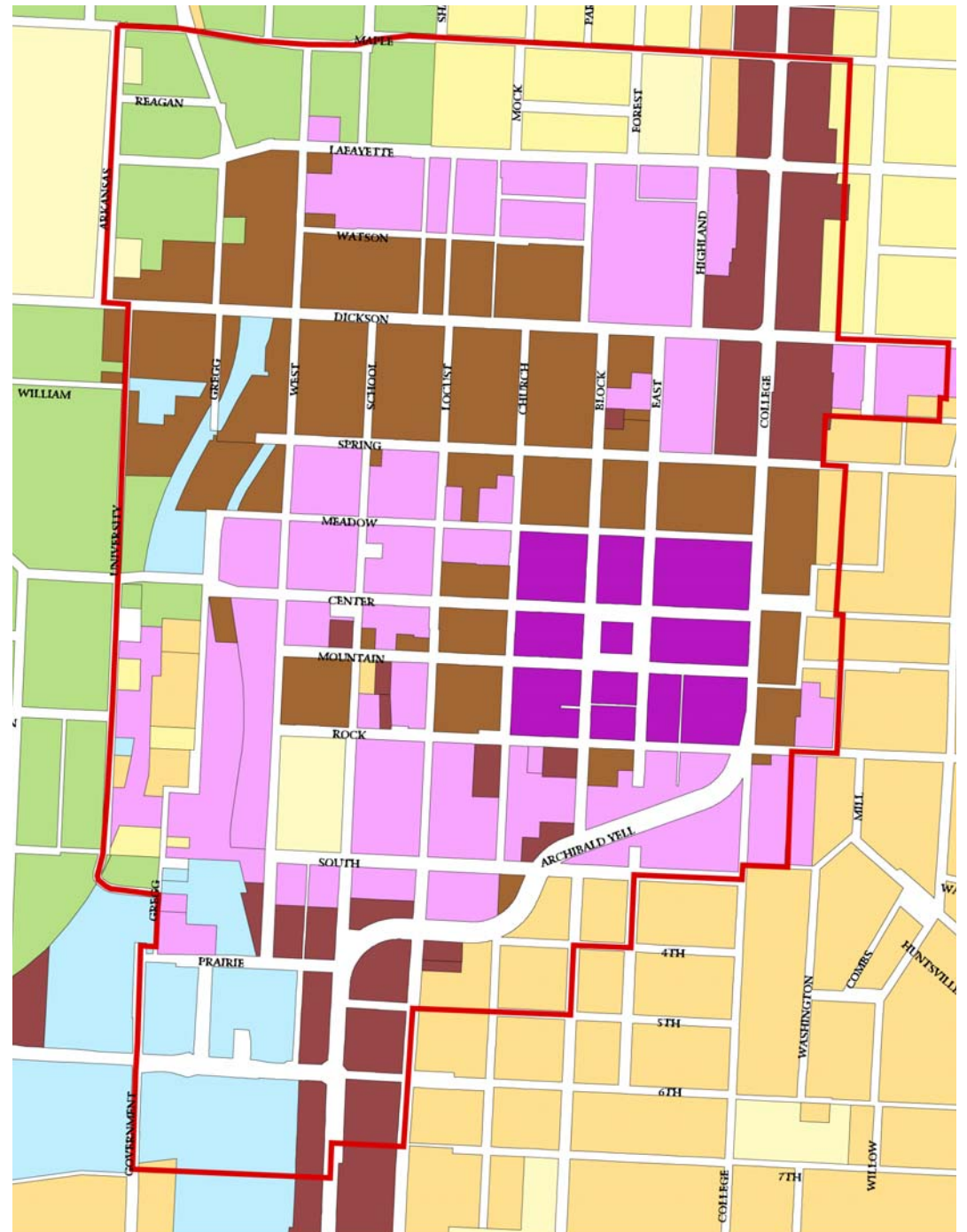
 Downtown Master Plan Boundary

 10 ft. Elevation Contours











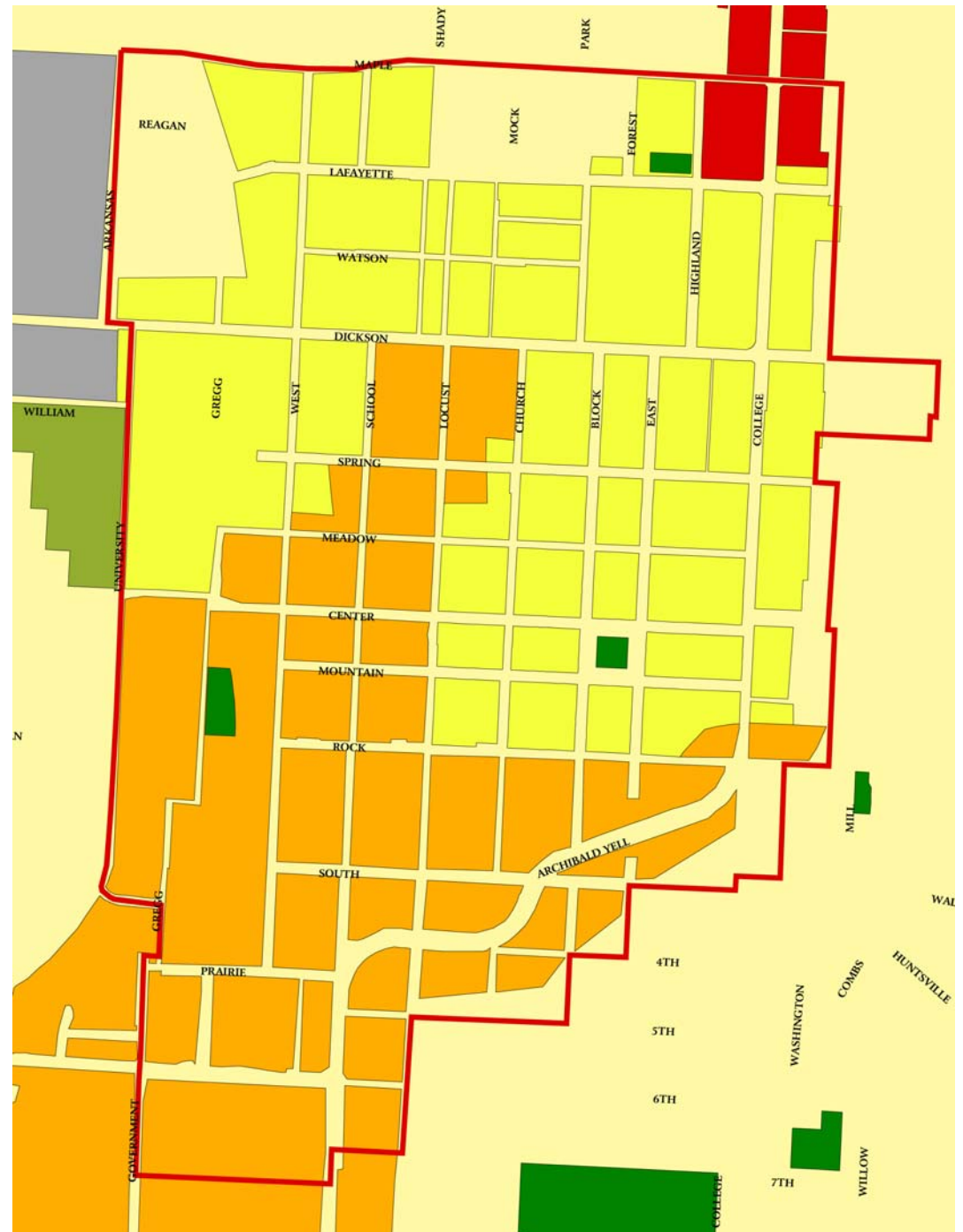
Zoning

- Downtown Master Plan Boundary
- C-2 Thoroughfare Commercial
- C-3 Central Business Commercial
- C-4 Downtown
- I-1 Heavy Commercial and Light Industrial
- P-1 Institutional
- R-0 Residential - Office
- RMF-24 Residential Multi-family (24 units per acre)
- RMF-40 Residential Multi-family (40 units per acre)
- RSF-4 Residential Single-family (4 units per acre)







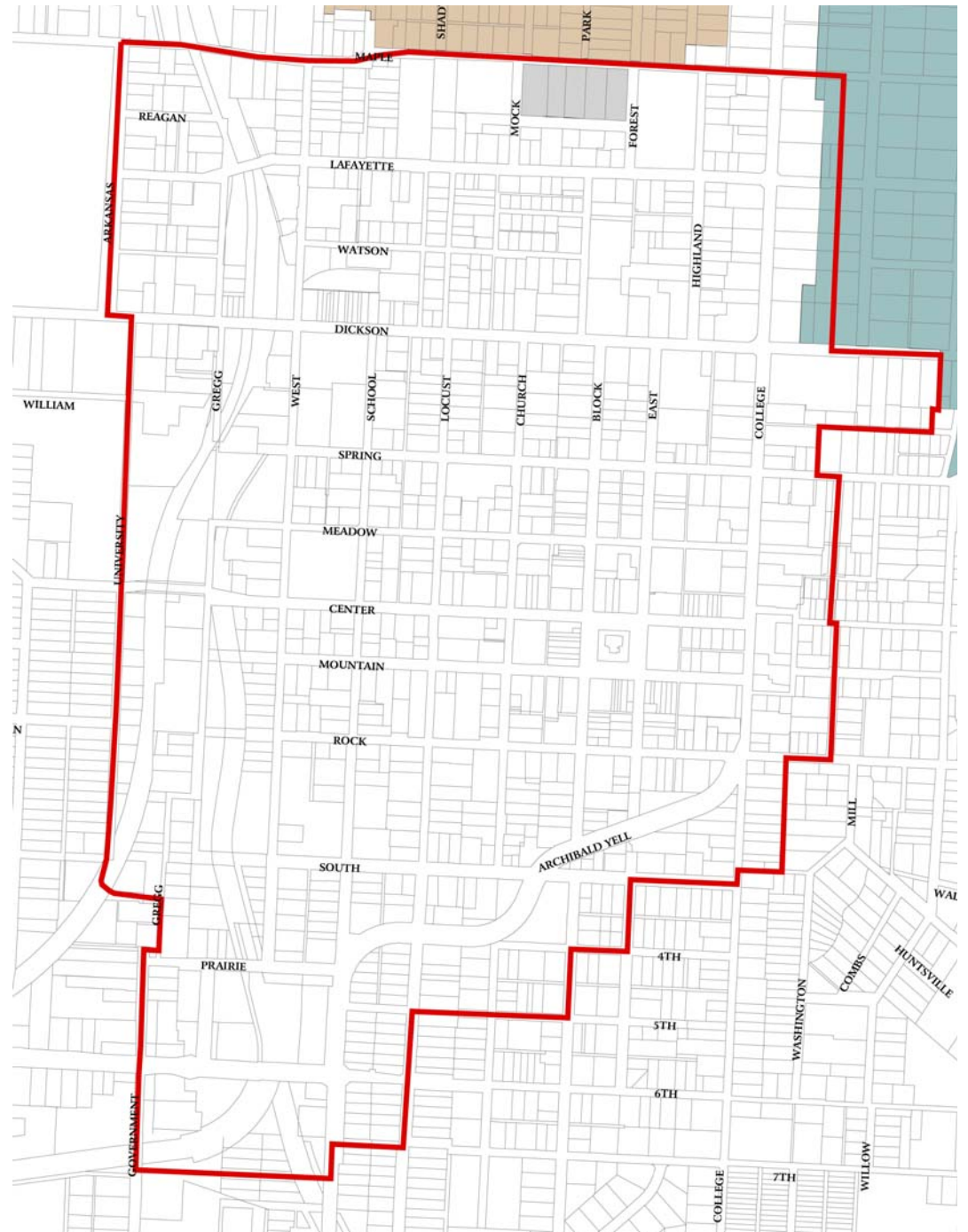
Future Land Use

-  Downtown Master Plan Boundary
-  Community Commercial
-  Historic Commercial
-  Mixed Use
-  Parks
-  Private Open Space
-  Residential
-  University












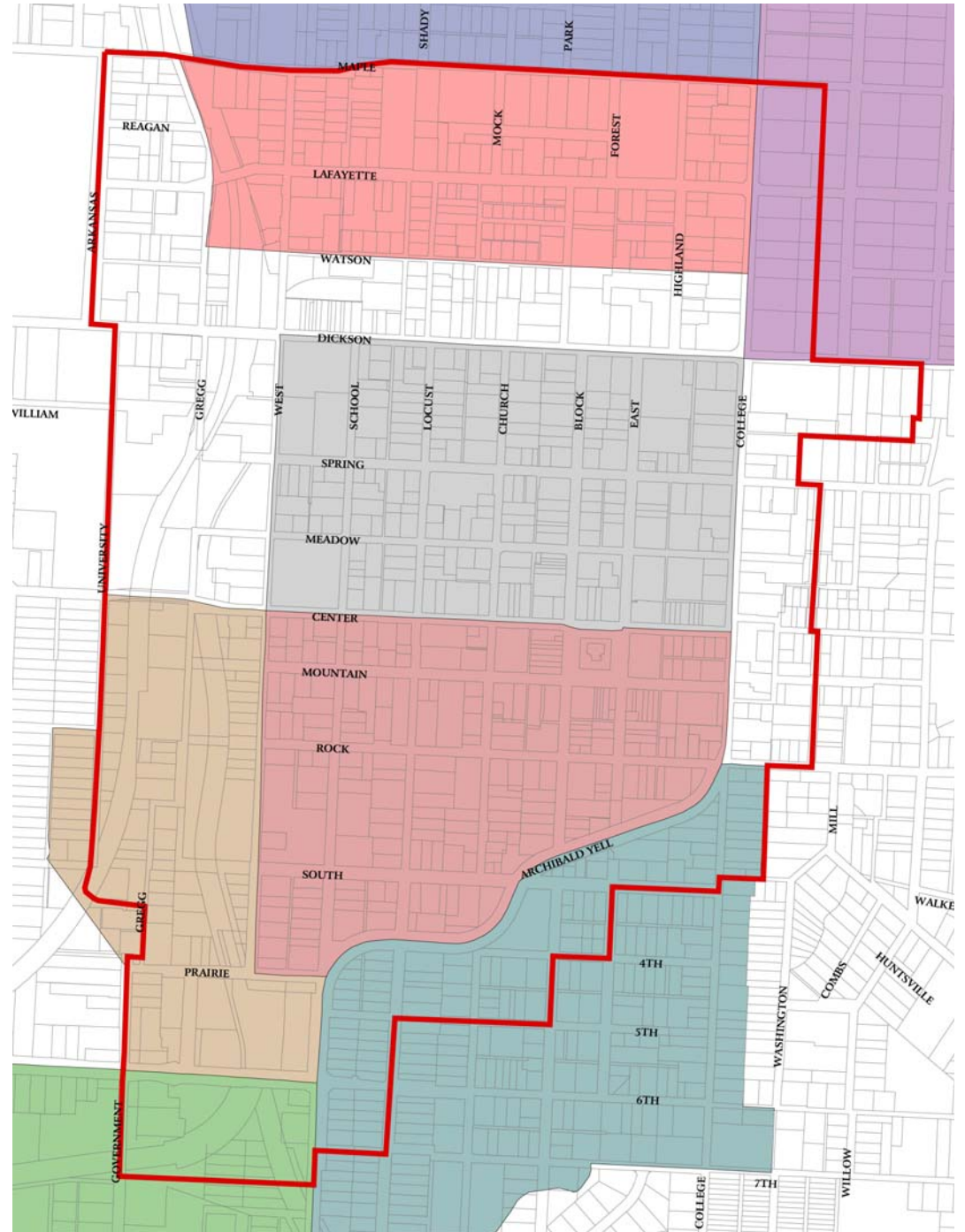
Historic Neighborhoods

-  Downtown Master Plan Boundary
-  Mt. Nord
-  Washington Willow
-  Wilson Park

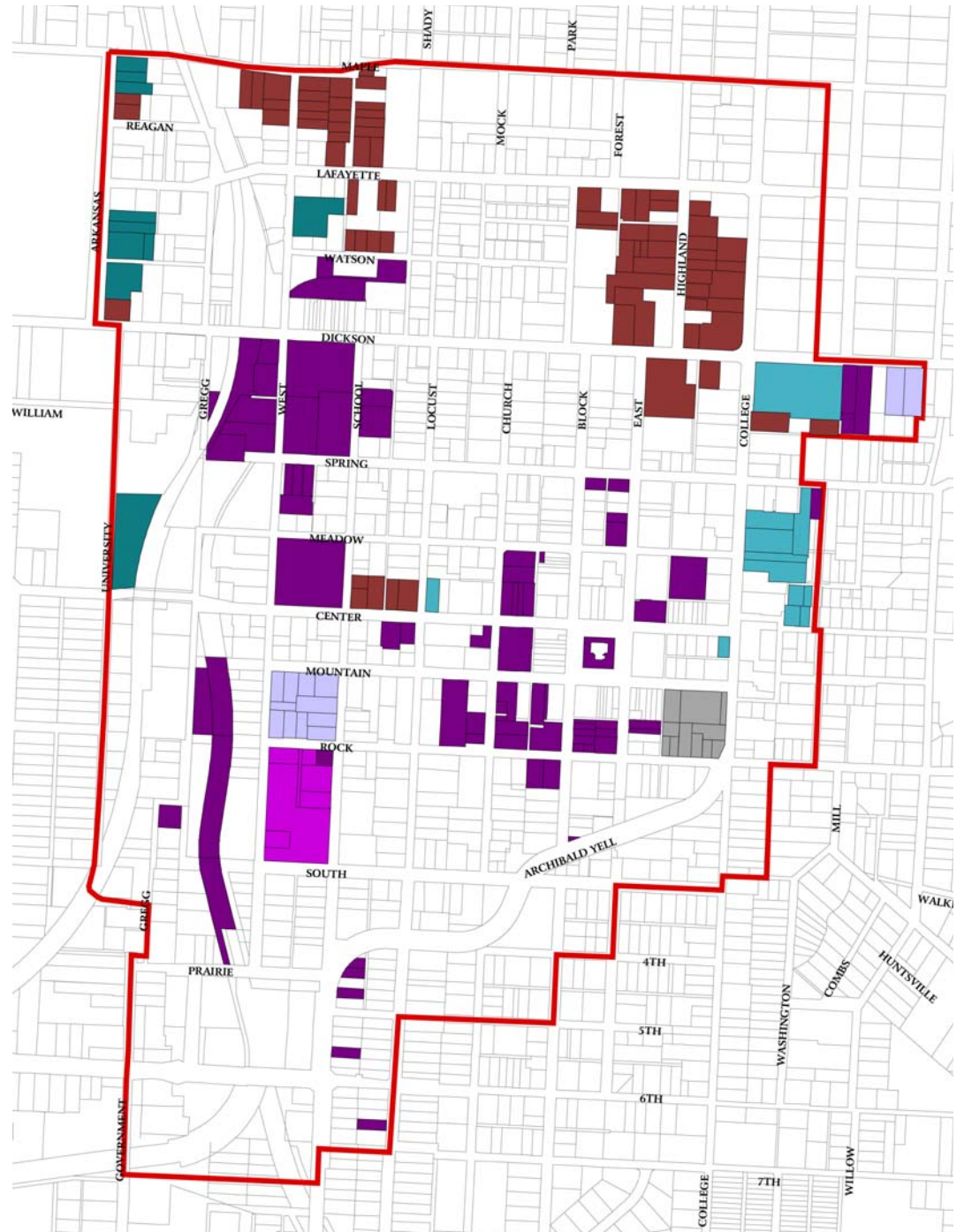
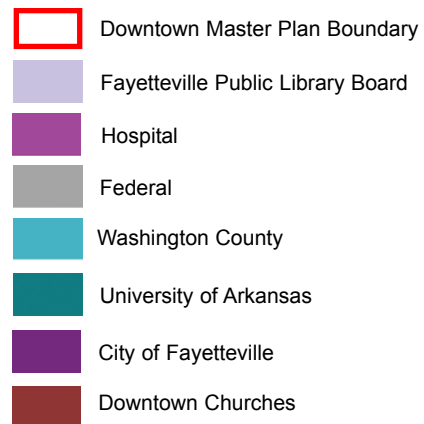


Nighborhood Associations

-  Downtown Master Plan Boundary
-  Dickson Street
-  Jennings Plus
-  Mill District
-  Town Branch
-  Town Mountain South
-  Washington Willow
-  West Lafayette Street Historic Neighborhoods
-  Wilson Park

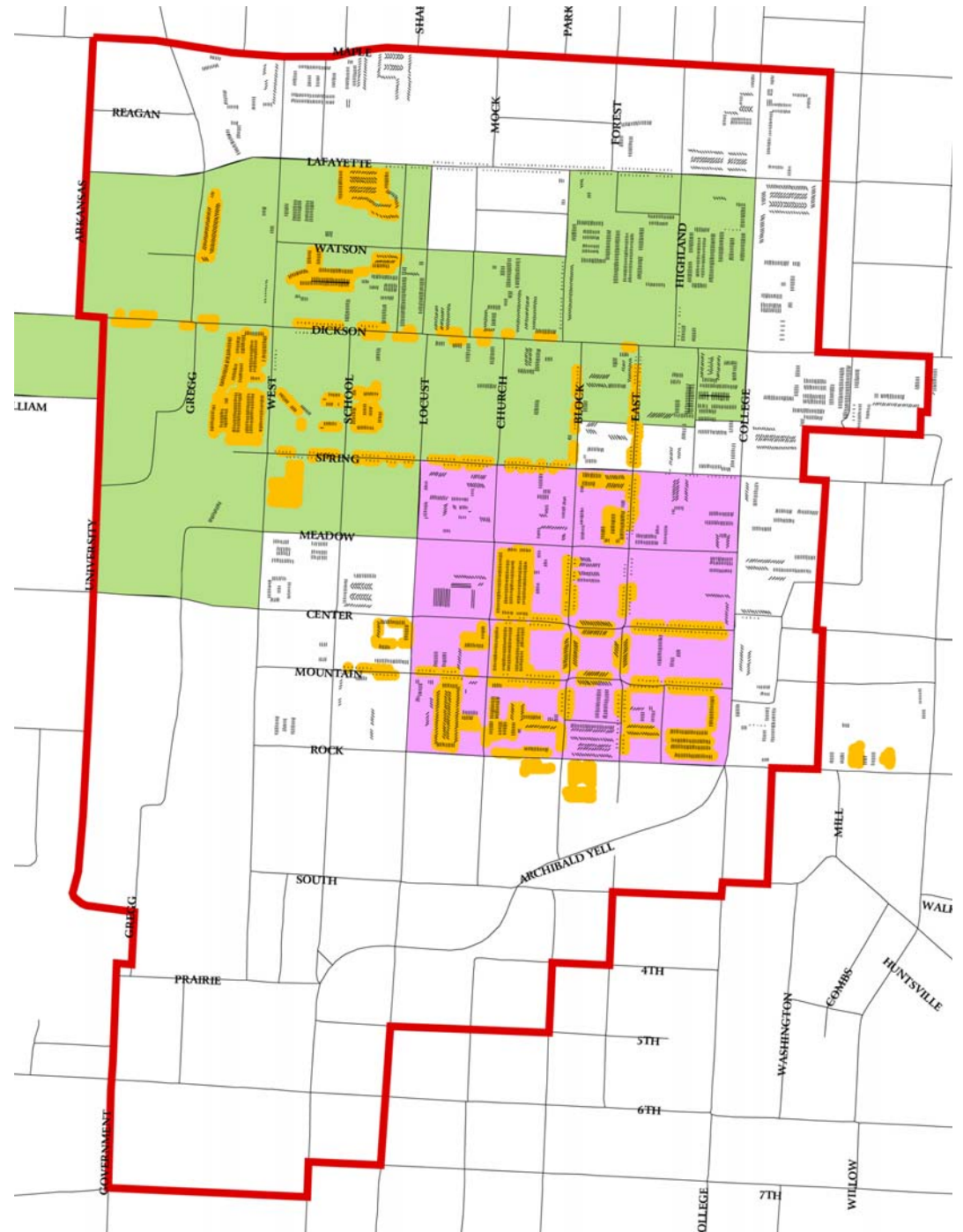


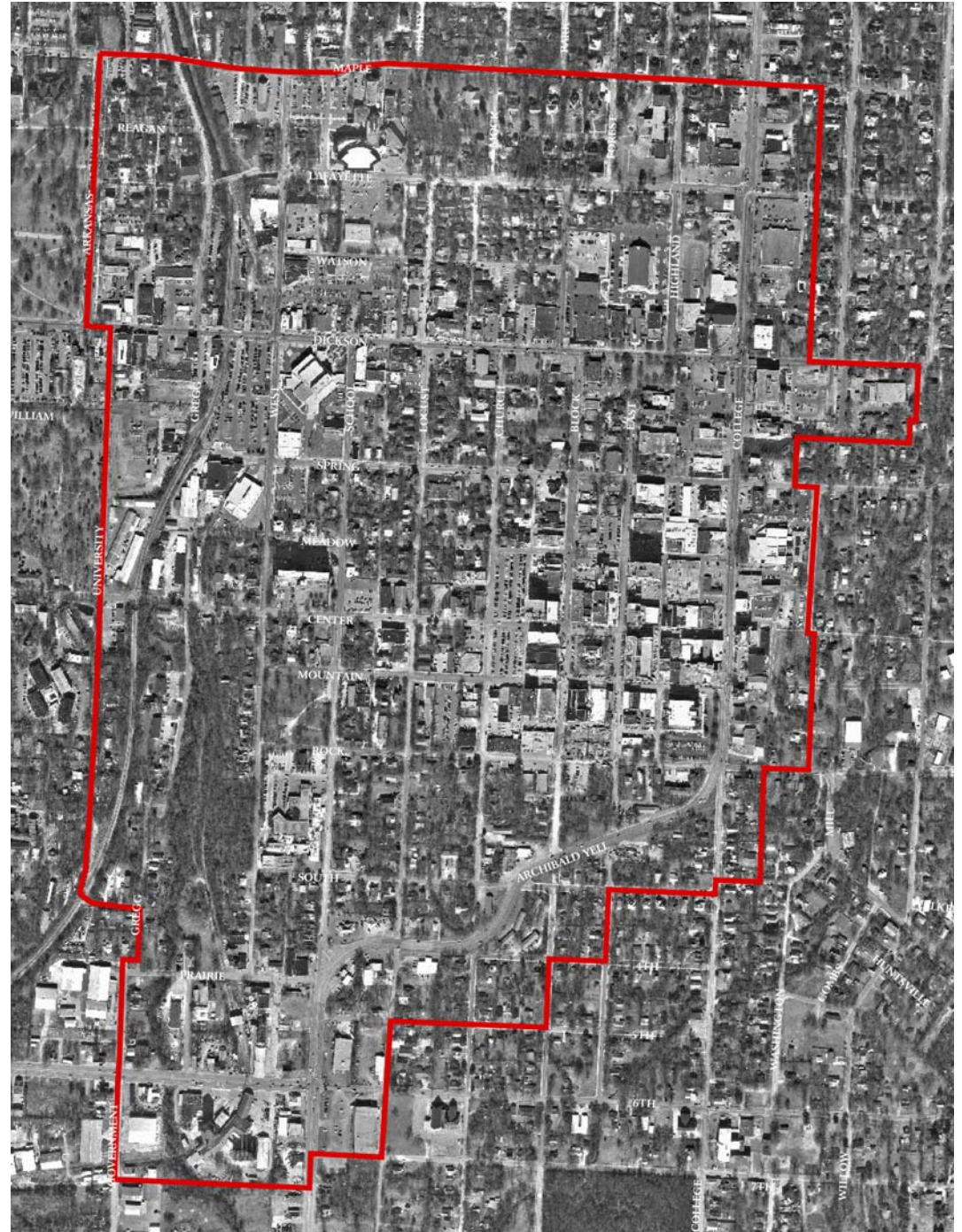
Property Ownership



Downtown Parking

-  Downtown Master Plan Boundary
-  Parking Spaces
-  Parking Spots
-  Dickson Street Central Improvement District No. 1
-  Off-Street Parking Development District No. 1





Orthophotograph

The Charrette

On Friday, January 9, 2004, a Community Kick-off Presentation marked the start of the charrette. Approximately 75 residents, City leaders, and local stakeholders gathered at the Bank of Fayetteville on the historic Downtown Square for the evening. After a rousing introduction by Mayor Dan Coody, John Lewis made a short speech. Mr. Lewis is a third generation Fayetteville resident, business owner, and community activist; he discussed the important role the charrette would play in the history of the City. Mr. Lewis focused on the evolution of the City from the idea of a "shining City on the hill" to the leading community of Northwest Arkansas. The attendees at this event also had the opportunity to view a series of historic photographs depicting the downtown's evolution. At the conclusion of Mr. Lewis' talk on the history of Fayetteville, Victor Dover, principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners and charrette leader, outlined the challenge for participants during the charrette week. Victor emphasized that the Plan would be created by the community, for the community. The evening concluded with lively discussion as excitement grew for the following day's event.

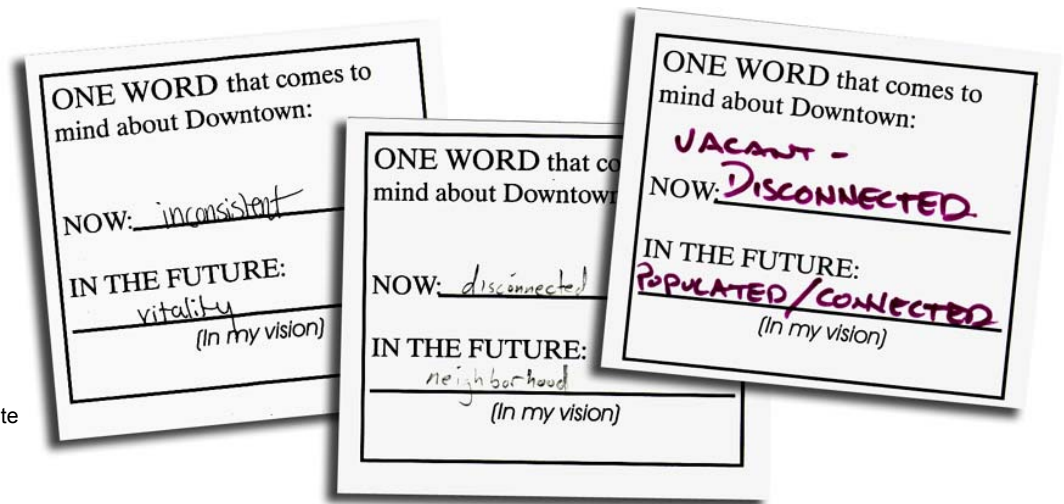


Community Kick-off Presentation

On Saturday, January 10, community members gathered at the Fayetteville Town Center for the hands-on design session. The event was advertised in the local newspapers, on local cable TV, on flyers posted in Downtown businesses, and through open invitations. Approximately 150 community members attended. Victor Dover started the day with a "food for thought" presentation, providing background on traditional town building, community planning, and smart growth principles. After laying out ground rules for the day, participants gathered in small groups at tables, each with several maps of Downtown. Residents came full of ideas and went to work, becoming "citizen planners." Armed with markers and pencils, participants rolled up their sleeves and began to illustrate their vision for the future of Downtown on large maps. A member of the design team or a volunteer from City staff was placed at each table to serve as a facilitator and guide the participants through a series of design exercises. Participants were met with a challenging question:

"What do you want your Downtown to be as it grows up?"

After introductions at the tables were made, each participant wrote down one word that describes Downtown Fayetteville today and one word that describes Downtown in their vision for the future.



As the day progressed, participants continued to draw on the maps and write down their ideas for the future of Downtown. At the end of the day, a representative from each table presented their table's ideas to the entire assembly. Common themes began to emerge quickly, as many important goals for Downtown were identified. Of the many ideas that were heard, some of the most widely shared ideas were:

- “encourage mixed-use and infill development”
- “establish green spaces and green corridors”
- “fix College Avenue and Archibald Yell”
- “make Fayetteville a real cultural destination”
- “increase walkability Downtown”

The goal of the hands-on session was to forge an initial consensus and develop an overall vision for the Downtown. In addition to the group presentations, each participant filled out a personal survey at the end of the session. The surveys allowed the consultant team to gain more detailed insight into the visions of the many individuals that participated. Feedback was very positive and the event was a invaluable resource for creating a unified plan.





How This Plan Was Created

From Sunday through Thursday, the design team ran an open design studio at the Nadine Baum Studios. Citizens and staffers were encouraged to stop by throughout the week to check the status of the plan and to make sure the design team was on the right track. The location of the studio in Downtown, as well as the immense community interest, led many people to participate throughout the week. The workgroup drawings and plans from the Saturday hands-on design session were placed around the room for easy review as new people became involved. While community members met with them in the studio, the design team continued to analyze the information gathered at the hands-on session and in the site analysis in order to formulate the initial concepts for the plan. The team was tasked with synthesizing the many ideas heard at the hands-on design session and throughout the week into a single cohesive master plan. The design team created lists, graphs, diagrams, drawings, and plans, combining and refining the ideas. Working on-location allowed the design team ready access to closely study Downtown, during all hours and on different days of the week. The planners observed day-to-day traffic patterns, public uses, and other details of civic life.

While everyone was encouraged to visit the design studio at anytime throughout the week, an Open House event was also held on Tuesday evening. The open house was arranged as an informal community meeting where citizens could further participate in the evolution of the plan. Participants viewed preliminary sketches and plans and visited the design studio. Next, Victor Dover and traffic engineer Rick Hall led a discussion on creating livable communities and great streets and summarized the work performed so far. Following the presentation, participants asked questions in an open-microphone session. Questions were recorded and more ideas expressed for inclusion in the Master Plan.

In addition to the public design studio, members of the design team met with specific stakeholders in scheduled technical meetings. The team met with City staff, City officials, Planning Commissioners, neighborhood associations, business and property owners, local architects, students, and Downtown Dickson Enhancement Project leaders, among others. These meetings helped make sure that as many groups and points of view as possible were heard and represented. The charrette week ended with a "Work-in-Progress" presentation on Thursday,

January 15. Over 200 citizens returned for the presentation eager to hear the planners and designers remarks on the vision for the future of Downtown. Victor Dover began the presentation with a summary of the week's events, then presented sketches and computer visualizations illustrating the hypothetical future build-out of Downtown. Focusing on specific areas, Victor walked the audience through a "future tour" showing both short and long-term changes that are possible under the plan. Renderings showed "before and after" illustrations of possible development scenarios. A summary of initial regulatory ideas to control and direct the character and quality of development within Downtown was also presented to the group. In addition, the design team discussed traffic and parking management, as well as the economic conditions and strategies necessary to make the plan a reality. At the end of the presentation, a new survey was distributed to gauge the community's opinion on the ideas presented that evening.

After the Charrette

At the conclusion of the week-long charrette, the design team departed Fayetteville and returned home to their offices. Over a period of six weeks the illustrative master plan produced during the charrette was refined and this report was created. The plan documents were then submitted for City and community review. The following report represents a synthesis of desires and goals for the future of Downtown within a workable framework of specific implementation measures.



Work-in-Progress Presentation

Level of Participation

Of the surveys received from those who attended the Work-in-Progress event:

- 15% attended only the Work-in-Progress Presentation
- 15% attended the Work-in-Progress Presentation and one charrette event
- 28% attended the Work-in-Progress Presentation and two charrette events
- 20% attended the Work-in-Progress Presentation and three charrette events
- 21% attended all charrette events

"I'm so proud to live here and to have participated in this exciting process."

- a community member, at the conclusion of the charrette